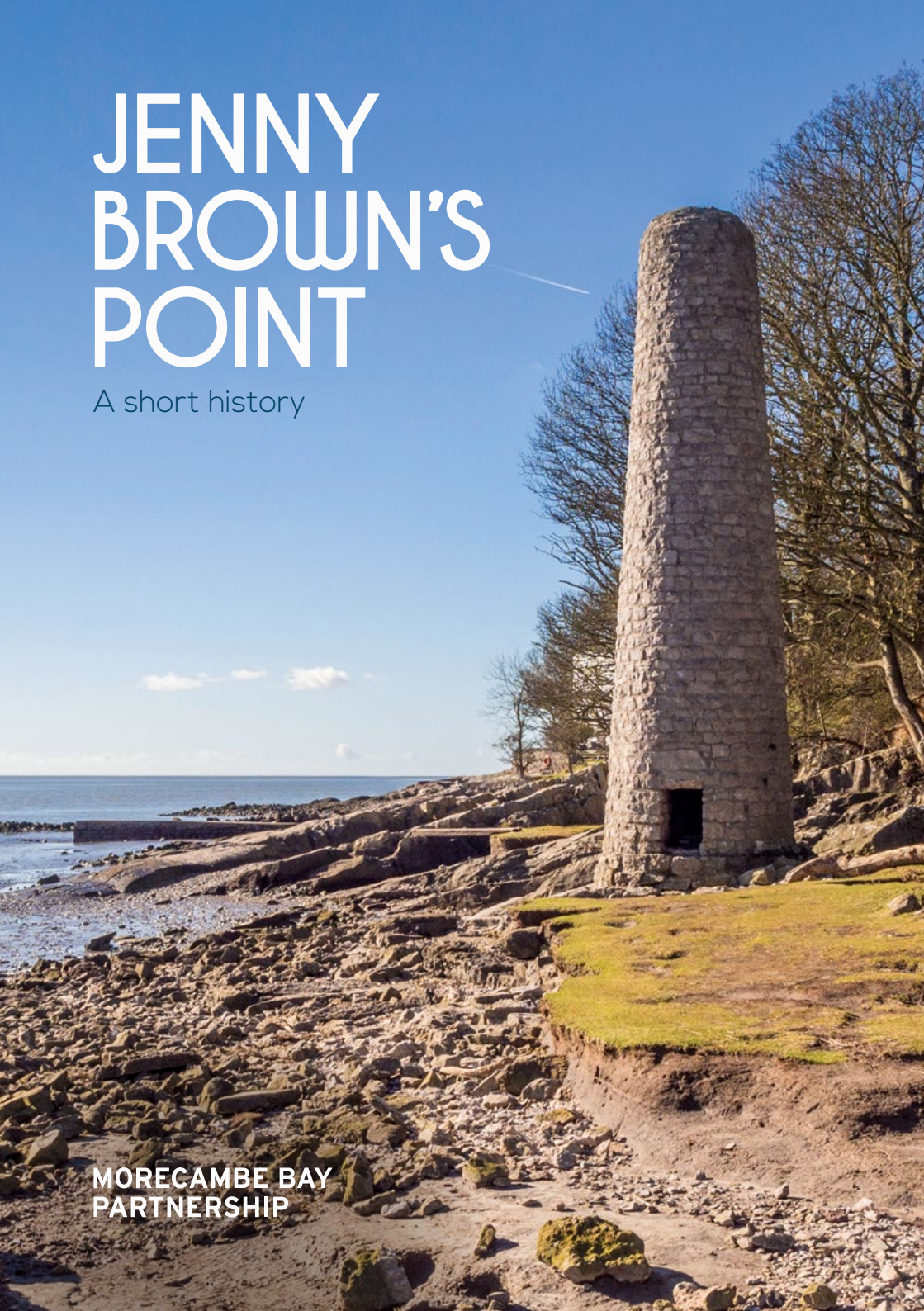


JENNY BROWN'S POINT

A short history

MORECAMBE BAY
PARTNERSHIP



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Front cover image
Chimney at Jenny Brown's Point

A LANDSCAPE LEGEND

WHO WAS JENNY BROWN?

One of Morecambe Bay's beauty spots takes the name of Jenny Brown. But who was this local legend?

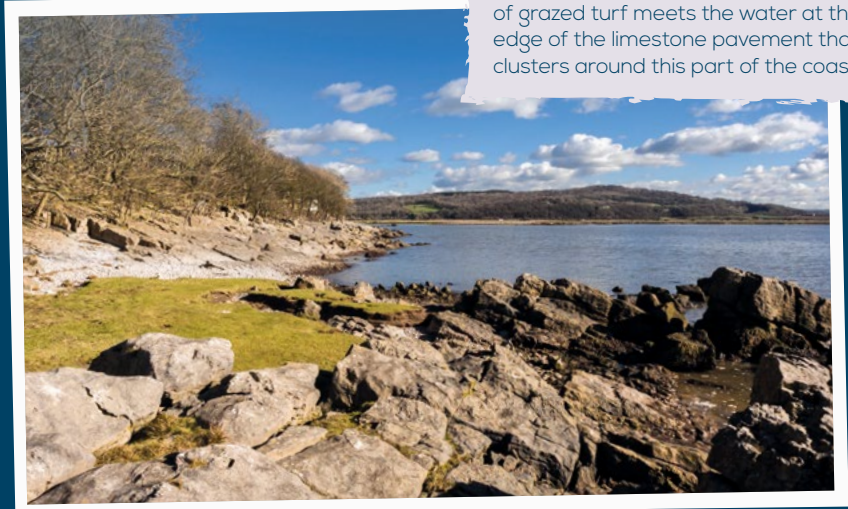
Some people say that Jenny was a nanny who drowned whilst trying to rescue children in her care from the incoming tide. Others say that she was a lonely local woman who was known to gaze longingly out to sea, hoping for the safe return of her lover who was lost at sea.

All we know for sure is that almost 400 years ago in the 1660s, there were two Jenny Browns, mother and daughter, living at nearby Dykehouse farm.

Whatever the truth may be, Jenny Brown's Point is how this place is known and her name will be attached to this beauty spot for evermore.

JENNY BROWN'S POINT

Jenny Brown's Point is an atmospheric viewpoint within Arnsdale & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It projects into Morecambe Bay at the north end of Warton Marsh. Set below woodland on Heald Brow, a short stretch of grazed turf meets the water at the edge of the limestone pavement that clusters around this part of the coast.



FURNACE PENINSULA

Anyone that has visited Jenny Brown's Point will know of the mysterious tower that stands prominently on the shore.

Until recently, no-one knew for sure what this tower was. People have suggested that it was a beacon for ships, while others have suggested that it is part of a lime kiln or a mine operation. Following archaeological investigation it is now believed that the tower is a chimney associated with a nearby furnace.

The chimney and furnace were probably built in the 1780s by the lord of the manor of Yealand, Robert Gibson, and is now all that remains of a reverberatory furnace. It is likely that the furnace was used to roast metal ores (iron and copper) mined from nearby Warton Crag and Heald Brow.

Roasting metal ores removes unwanted sulphur, carbonate and water, purifying the ores. A process known as calcining made the ore lighter and cheaper to transport. The purified ore was transported onwards by water. A nearby sea wall or stone quay would have been a useful point to remove the calcined product for further processing, or to unload raw materials.

Gibson died in 1790, and it seems that the fire in his furnace died soon afterwards. Even with local supplies of raw materials, a mini-enterprise like this would have struggled to compete with the huge copper smelting industries at Swansea.



Volunteers recording archaeology
©Louise Martin

PEELING BACK THE LAYERS

Since 2014, this site has been the focus of a National Lottery Heritage Fund community archaeology project led by Morecambe Bay Partnership.

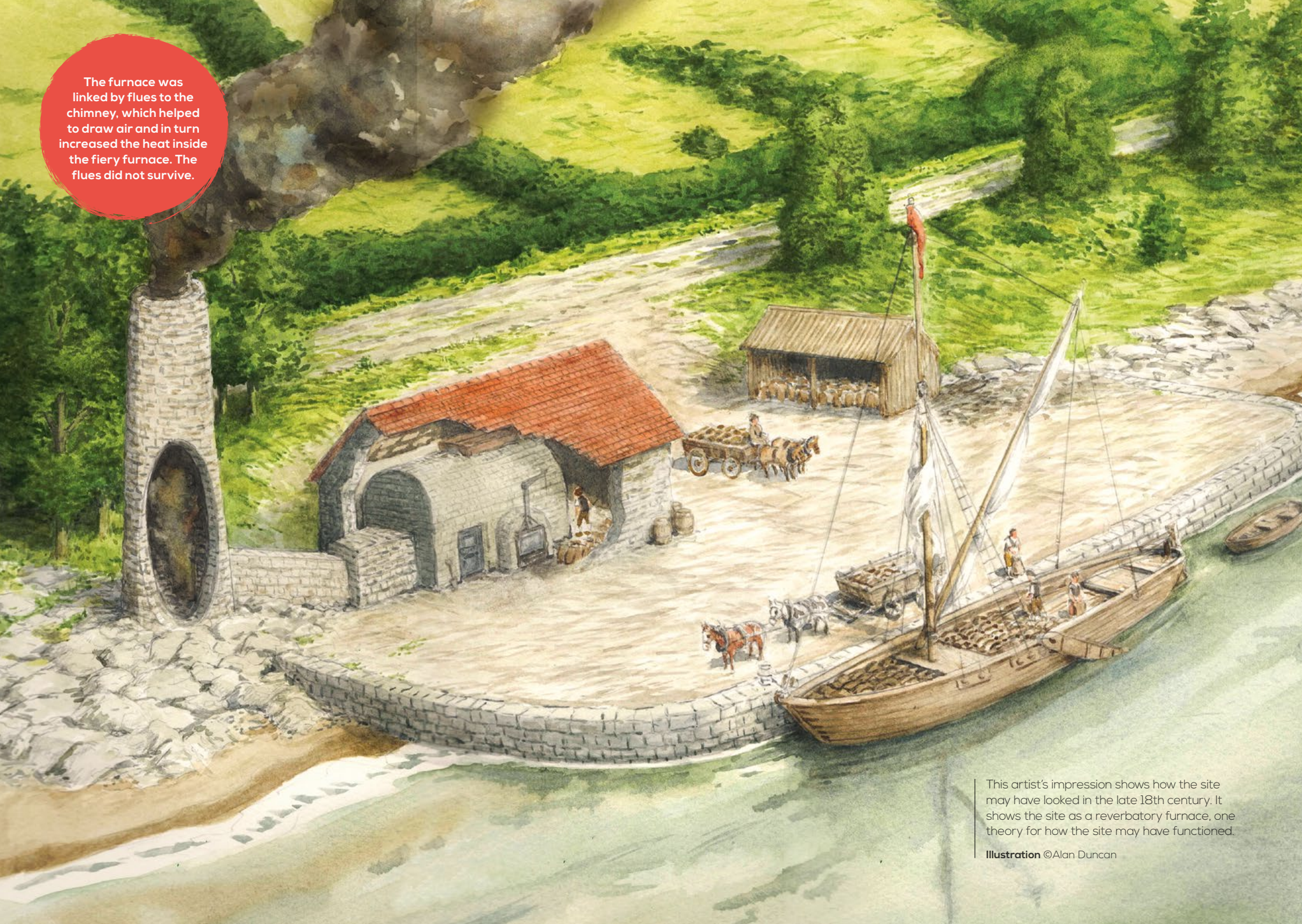
Although the chimney is all that seems to survive there are hints and traces of building foundations surrounding it. Volunteers have researched the site, surveyed it, examined its structures and obtained samples.

A small excavation in 2017 revealed a sunken ash pit and a probable stone-built flue and building foundations. Deposits of coal and clinker, a waste from burning coal, help to support the theory that this was a furnace.

The chimney was repointed and capped using a lime sand mortar in the 1990s – so looks surprisingly smart today. How might this place look now if Jenny Brown's Point had become the centre of the copper smelting industry instead of Swansea?

Image ©Louise Martin





The furnace was linked by flues to the chimney, which helped to draw air and in turn increased the heat inside the fiery furnace. The flues did not survive.

This artist's impression shows how the site may have looked in the late 18th century. It shows the site as a reverberatory furnace, one theory for how the site may have functioned.

Illustration ©Alan Duncan

BEYOND THE CHIMNEY

The area covered by saltmarsh here has grown and shrunk over the years and this has affected the way people have changed and used the landscape.

Greenwood's Map of Lancashire 1818.
Image courtesy of Lancaster University Library



QUAKER'S STANG

A little waterway known as Quicksand Pool runs past the Jenny Brown's Point chimney. A short walk upstream will bring you to a large embankment of stone and earth known as Quaker's Stang. It is first referred to as a 'New Embankment' on an 1818 map of the area. On this same map, the name Quaker's Stang is used for a little bridge crossing Quicksand Pool.

Yealand and Lindeth were once home to prominent Quaker families. Treacherous salt marshes lay in between Lindeth and the Meeting House in Yealand. Maybe 'stang' referred to the large stone used to bridge the water when this was the route they took.

THE GRASS IS GREENER

A broken concrete bridge across the channel of Quicksand Pool reflects a time when saltmarsh was an extensive and valuable resource. The famous Silverdale saltmarsh sheep headed out across it onto the marsh to graze. Turfs cut from the saltmarsh were used for bowling greens.



Image courtesy of Simon Williams

Image courtesy of Simon Williams

A WARTIME ROLE

You might be able to make out timbers projecting into the air. These were part of a bombing range on Warton Marsh and were used for target practice during World War II.



Image courtesy of Simon Williams

A CHIMNEY

Towards Quaker's Stang and Warton Crag, you will see a rectangular chimney near Crag Foot. It worked for the iron ore works known as the 'Paint Mines' around Warton Crag. It was rebuilt in the 1840s as part of the pump house to drain Leighton Moss, transforming it into rich agricultural land until it re-flooded during the First World War.



LINDETH TOWER

This private house, on the road from Silverdale to Jenny Brown's Point, was built in 1842 as a summer house for the wealthy Fleetwood family.

Famous Victorian novelist Elizabeth Gaskell often stayed here, and used it as a writing retreat during the 1840s and 50s. She worked on classics here like *North and South*, and *Wives and Daughters*. She wrote the novel *Ruth* here shortly after the Tower was built.

"Lindeth Tower sounds very grand but it is a queer ugly square tower in our garden – the latter is full of weeds,"

Elizabeth Gaskell June 1858

Please respect the privacy of the residents.



Lindeth Tower ©Michelle Cooper

Image courtesy of Simon Williams



JACK SCOUT

The name of this beauty spot may come from the Old English word for oak and a Norse word for a cliff or viewpoint. When there used to be large areas of saltmarsh in this area, Jack Scout and other nearby fields were used to corral all the sheep during the very high spring tides while the salt marsh was submerged. There is also a nicely-restored 18th century lime kiln here.

Today Jack Scout is an important nature conservation site, protected as an SSSI. The National Trust purchased Jack Scout in 1983, and it manages the site to encourage the ever-changing mosaic of grasslands and scrub vegetation. The bare limestone rocks are also very important, for specialist plants and invertebrates.

A SILVERDALE STORY

Walduck's Wall

Manchester metal broker Herbert J. Walduck was a friend of Edward Bousson Dawson, a north Lancashire landowner and Lord of the Manor of Aldcliffe. In 1875 Jenny Brown's Point was at the centre of Walduck's ambitious scheme to reclaim land from the sea.

Walduck planned to build walls over a mile out into Morecambe Bay between Arnside and Hest Bank to prevent the tide from submerging the land. If his scheme was successful he stood to gain over 6,300 acres of farmland, from which he could make a tidy profit.

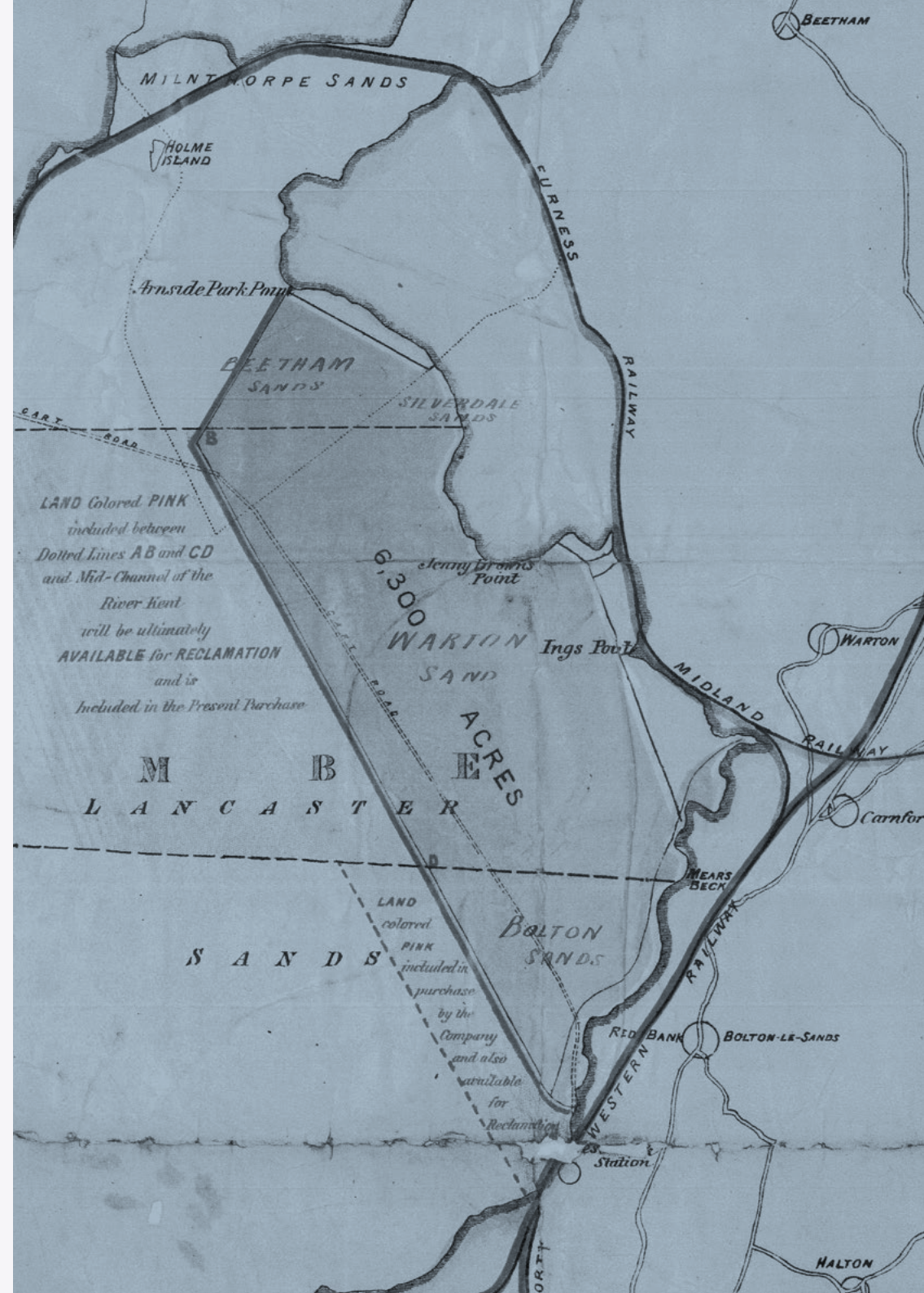
Walduck's master plan was never realised. Silverdale residents were concerned that Walduck's scheme would infringe upon their rights to the shore for both grazing and fishing. The House of Lords backed the residents, and Walduck was forced to pare back his plans to enclose land between Jenny Brown's Point and Hest Bank. With parliamentary approval Walduck's army of men started to build an enclosure wall at Jenny Brown's Point.

Large limestone rocks were quarried from the side of the nearby hill and hauled by horse drawn wagon along a rail line that grew longer as the wall grew in length. Although a steam locomotive was bought to speed up the transport of stone, Walduck and his men were no match for the power of the tide and the shifting sands. By 1879 the whole project had run out of cash and work ceased.

Walduck's Wall reflects the triumph of the sea over our attempts to control it. Twice a day the wall is covered by the incoming tide, and sometimes it is completely submerged beneath the shifting sands of Morecambe Bay.

Walduck's original 1873 plan to Parliament was never realised

Illustration © Lancashire Archives



TRAGEDY STRIKES

It is a Saturday morning in 1879. Captain Mutter, a retired sea merchant from Whitby, is the supervisor of works on Walduck's Wall.

Mutter walks along the rail line but steps off the tracks to let a fully laden horse-drawn wagon pass. As the horse passes it knocks Mutter with its head. Mutter stumbles under the wheels of the wagon. The wagon tips and sheds its load of limestone onto him.

A steam locomotive, named Jenny Brown, returns the stricken Captain Mutter back to land. Sadly, he dies a few days later from his injuries.

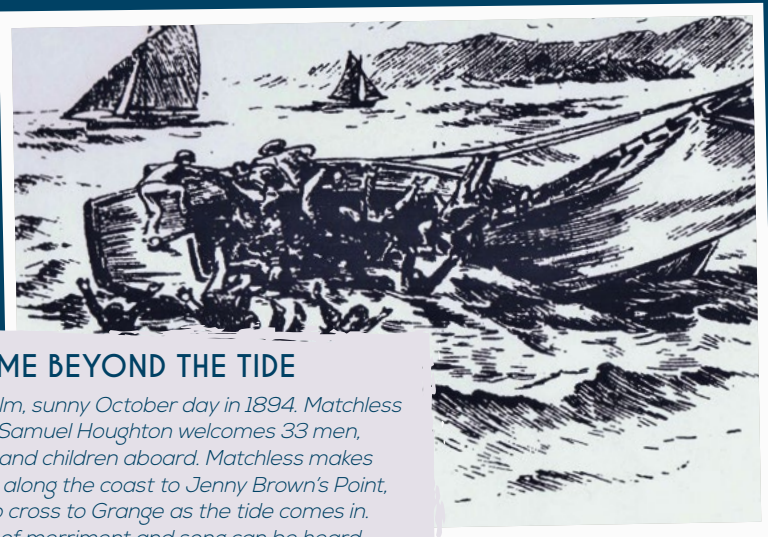
Captain Mutter, who lived with his family at Lindeth Lodge, now Wolf House, is buried in Silverdale cemetery opposite the Methodist chapel. Herbert Walduck died in 1892 – his family grave is just a few feet from Captain Mutter's.

An image of Walduck's Wall today.
In 1977 a severe storm cleared off the sand exposing the artificial embankment.

© Louise Martin

THE MATCHLESS DISASTER

Just beyond the end of Walduck's Wall is the site of Morecambe Bay's greatest tragedy. The Matchless was one of many fishing boats licensed to provide pleasure cruise trips from Morecambe to Grange-over-Sands.

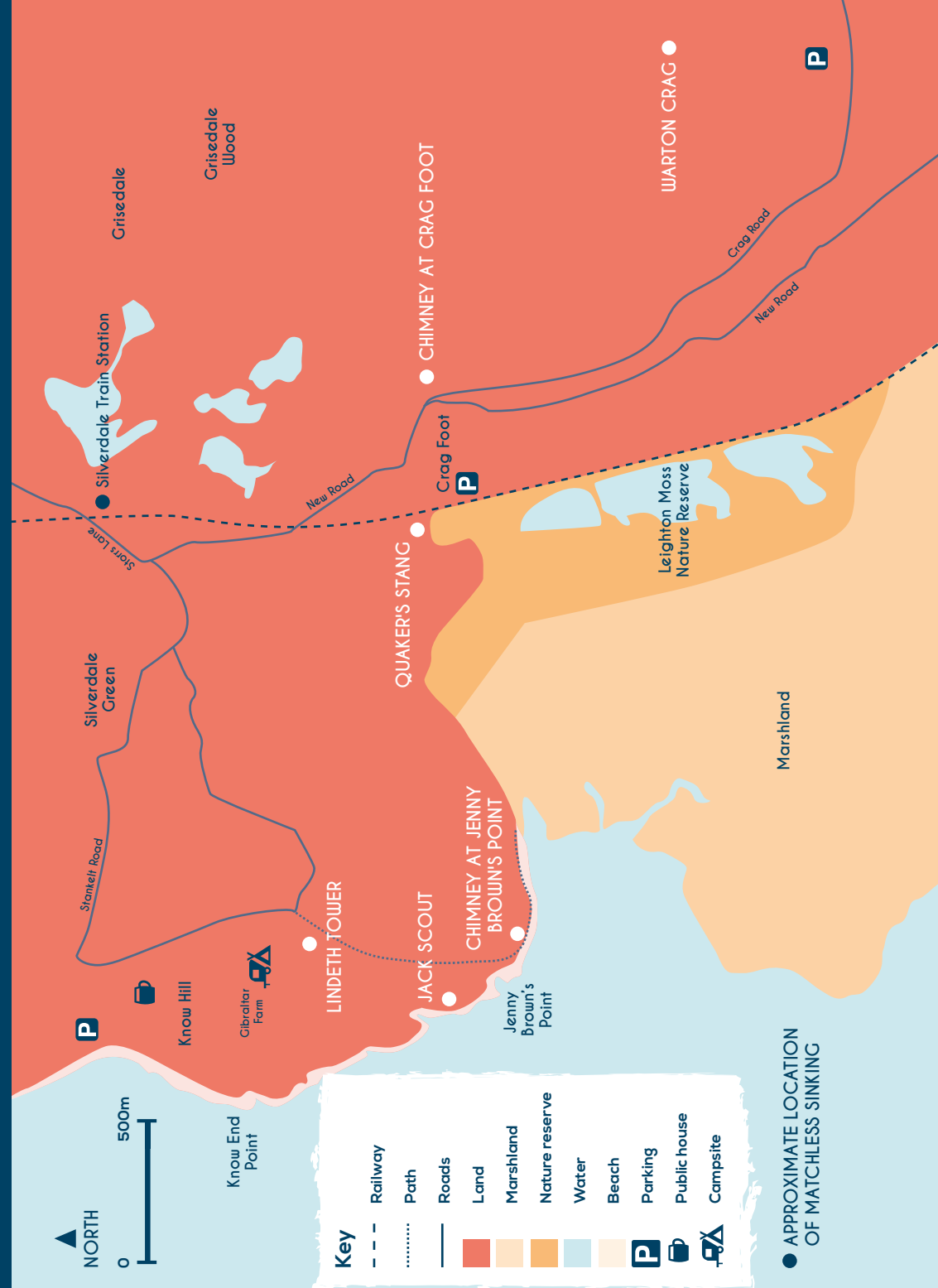


A HOME BEYOND THE TIDE

It is a calm, sunny October day in 1894. Matchless skipper Samuel Houghton welcomes 33 men, women and children aboard. Matchless makes her way along the coast to Jenny Brown's Point, ready to cross to Grange as the tide comes in. Sounds of merriment and song can be heard. A sudden gust of wind catches her sails and in a moment the boat turns and spills everyone overboard. Other boats quickly come to their aid, but only nine people, including Houghton, survive.

According to the two-day inquest, 25 people who lost their lives were 'accidentally drowned'. Most passengers were millworkers and their families from Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Sketch from the Lancashire County and Standard Advertiser, 7 September 1894, as drawn by an eyewitness to the *Matchless* tragedy.



The shore around Jenny Brown's Point can quickly become cut off by incoming tides. Quicksand and hidden channels make it very dangerous. If you plan to visit the sites please check the tides and ensure that it is safe. Please stick to the footpaths and do not put yourself at risk.

Morecambe Bay Partnership is a local charity that celebrates and conserves, connects and collaborates. Our supporters make the Bay a richer place by uncovering lost stories, recording history, sharing skills, volunteering and donating.

By working together we make great things happen, such as collecting the stories shared in this booklet.

You can get involved by volunteering to look after heritage sites, care for nature, or do beach cleans.

morecambebay.org.uk/get-involved

Your gift could train volunteers to research local history, open up access for disabled people, create safe cycle routes, and bring great art events to connect our communities. Thank you.

morecambebay.org.uk/donate

Special thanks to Simon Williams for his dedicated research into the history of the area and supporting this work at Jenny Brown's Point.

And to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, landowners, our partners, supporters and our vibrant volunteer network.

For more information about this and other sites of historic significance around Morecambe Bay please visit

www.recordingmorecambebay.org.uk



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